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ABSTRACT

This report presents final proposals of five transition groups that gave shape to the recommendations of the Australian National Training Authority Ministerial Council relating to bringing training providers and their clients more closely together. Section 2 discusses simplifying processes and structures, through national structures, closer integration of curriculum and standards development, national recognition, and client services standards and makes six final proposals. Section 3 addresses improving the quality of vocational education and training (VET) by devolving responsibility and assessment and includes nine final proposals. Section 4 focuses on strategies to promote diversity and relevance, including the following: competition and user choice, the Australian Standards Framework (ASF), increasing relevance of curriculum, industrial relations and training, and information and staff development and makes six final proposals. Appendixes include documents and guidelines referred to in the final proposals, as well as other materials: Client Service Standards; Delegation of Endorsement of Competency Standards; Principles for Accreditation of Courses under Delegation; Arrangements for Assessment for National Recognition of Competencies; Principles for User Choice Pilots; Review of the ASF; Customization Guidelines; Joint Industry Training and Education Council Statement; and Principles and Operating Guidelines for the Standards and Curriculum Council and National Staff Development Committee. (YLB)

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REPORT FROM THE ANTA BOARD TO THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL

The National Agenda for Vocational Education and Training

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL TRAINING AUTHORITY

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May 1995

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NATIONAL TRAINING
AUTHORITY

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Explanatory Note

This Report ***The National Agenda for Vocational Education and Training*** represents the decisions made by the ANTA Ministerial Council in May 1995 based on advice from the ANTA Board. The Principles and Operating Guidelines for the Standards and Curriculum Council and for the National Staff Development Committee were cleared out-of-session by Ministerial Council members before their meeting on 25 May 1995. They are appended to this report as Appendix 9.

Also printed behind the Report is a document titled ***Progress Against Proposals for More Effective Implementation of Training Reform***. This document represents outcomes against the original proposals which were endorsed by Ministers in September 1994.

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CONTENTS

		Page
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Simplifying Processes and Structures	2
	Final Proposals (i) (ii) (iii) (iv)	5
	Final Proposals (v) (vi)	6
3.	Improving the Quality of VET	6
	Final Proposals (vii) (viii) (ix) (x) (xi)	8
	Final Proposals (xii) (xiii) (xiv) (xv)	10
4.	Promoting Diversity and Relevance	11
	Final Proposals (xvi) (xvii)	13
	Final Proposal (xviii) (xix) (xx)	14
5.	Conclusion	15
	Final Proposal (xxi)	16

Appendices

1. Client Service Standards
2. Delegation of Endorsement of Competency Standards
3. Principles for Accreditation of Courses under Delegation
4. Arrangements for Assessment for National Recognition of Competencies
5. Principles for User Choice Pilots
6. Review of the Australian Standards Framework
7. Customisation Guidelines
8. Joint Industry Training and Education Council Statement
9. Principles and Operating Guidelines for the Standards and Curriculum Council and the National Staff Development Committee

1. Introduction

1.1 This Report from the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) to the ANTA Ministerial Council represents an important point in the process of reform to the vocational education and training (VET) sector in Australia. The major policy imperative for the reforms has been the need for Australian enterprises to compete more effectively in the growing international marketplace, with a concomitant need for a multi-skilled and adaptable labour force.

1.2 The Authority reported to Ministers in October 1993 that, while there was broad support for training reform, there was a level of concern from industry about the complexity of the implementation process. Ministers agreed and requested the Authority to undertake a review of training reform implementation.

1.3 The review process identified the disparity between the training system and industry as a major weakness in the vocational education and training system. Consequently, in its report to Ministers in September 1994, the Authority emphasised measures to ensure responsiveness, competition, quality and diversity as the major strategies to bring training providers and their clients - enterprises and individuals - more closely together.

1.4 The Authority reported to Ministers in September 1994 on the outcomes of the review and Ministers broadly endorsed the proposals in the Authority's report. They approved also the establishment of a broadly-based Implementation Group, chaired by Mr Stuart Hornery AO, Chairman of Lend Lease Corporation and a member of the ANTA Board. The Implementation Group reported to the ANTA Board; its advice forms the basis of this report.

1.5 The Implementation Group established five Transition Teams to work through the details of the proposals. The outcomes of their deliberations form the basis of the final proposals presented in this report. A number of other issues, not fully dealt with by the Transition Teams, will form the basis of ongoing work by the proposed Standards and Curriculum Council. An overview of the treatment of the proposals put to Ministers in September 1994 is contained in Attachment B to the agenda paper.

1.6 The Implementation Group was given a specific brief. In working out mechanisms to give shape to Ministers' recommendations, the Group was requested to ensure that each reform made the system as a whole more responsive, more transparent and of increased quality.

1.7 In these ways the reforms to the vocational education and training system are very much in line with the new policy approach adopted by the Council of Australian Governments emerging from the Hilmer Report into a national competition policy for Australia.

1.8 The Authority is confident that their proposals fit within that framework. Twenty one proposals are presented for Ministers' consideration. Papers supporting the proposals can be found at Appendices 1-8.

2. Simplifying Processes and Structures

National Structures

2.1 Improved public sector performance is founded, in part, on establishing clear cut roles and accountabilities for public sector agencies; in particular by distinguishing between strategic policy making and operational roles.

2.2 In the past, responsibility for implementing vocational education and training reforms has been given to a variety of bodies on a largely *ad hoc* basis. As well as the State and Territory Authorities which manage public vocational education and training funds, a number of other agencies with national responsibilities have played a part in developing standards, curriculum, recognition processes and undertaking professional development for staff. Complexity and lack of co-ordination has resulted.

2.3 There can be a tendency to characterise reform to structures and accountabilities as bureaucratic concerns. Yet it is the Authority's contention that such concerns lie at the heart of micro-economic reform of publicly funded vocational education and training. Performance based planning is at odds with overly complicated structures and processes.

2.4 If industry groups, enterprises and individuals are to make effective use of the new approaches to competency standards, to recognition processes and other reforms, they need to be able to access the system at a single point. Clearer responsibilities and greater accountability to Ministers are also required.

2.5 To this end, Ministers have previously agreed that the functions of the National Training Board (NTB), the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC), and the National Staff Development Committee should be brought together within the ANTA structure responsible to Ministers through the Authority. Ministers agreed that this should take

effect through two separate bodies formed under Section 10 of the ANTA Act. One will be called the Standards and Curriculum Council covering competency standards, curriculum, the national recognition of training, assessment, quality assurance and the Australian Qualifications Framework as it relates to vocational education and training. The Council is to have both determinative and advisory powers. The other, to be called the National Staff Development Committee, will cover staff training and development.

2.6 There is a formal legal requirement under the ANTA Act for the Ministerial Council to confer the additional functions to be exercised by the Council and Committee on ANTA.
A resolution has been drafted to effect this.

2.7 Principles and Operating Guidelines have been drawn up for the Council and the Committee. The Guidelines, in effect, represent the constitution and charter of the Council and Committee covering the underlying principles upon which their operations are to be based and detailing the powers, functions, membership and funding arrangements. Ministers have been asked to approve these guidelines 'out of session' to expedite the appointment of the members of the Standards and Curriculum Council.

2.8 The National Training Board is a company and as its functions are to be subsumed by the Council it should be wound-up. The current Memorandum of Understanding sets the framework for the operations of the NTB and therefore should also be discontinued. Neither ACTRAC nor the current National Staff Development Committee are legal entities. No formal action, other than Ministerial decision, is required to conclude their activities.

2.9 Arrangements for ACTRAC Products Limited need to be separately considered. ACTRAC Products Limited is a company with vocational education and training Ministers as shareholders. It will continue as a company under the new arrangements. Since the Authority is not a shareholder, it is appropriate that company members enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Authority to ensure that the operations of ACTRAC Products Limited are consistent with the policies of the Authority and the Ministerial Council and that the broader function of marketing the products of the Standards and Curriculum Council is undertaken.

2.10 Ministers have previously agreed that consideration of financial issues should be guided by the following principles:

- that the arrangements are cost neutral; and
- that there should be a once-off adjustment is Commonwealth/State funding.

The once-off adjustment was initiated through the Commonwealth budgetary process.

2.11 Action is being taken to offer the staff of the agencies employment with the Authority and to secure office accommodation in Melbourne for those functions located there. Action is also being taken to make appointments to the Council and to appoint its Executive Director. Ministers will be formally consulted on the proposed membership of the Council and Committee at the Ministerial Council meeting.

Closer Integration of Curriculum and Standards Development

2.12 Under current arrangements, curriculum and standards development, and the funding to support the process, are not effectively co-ordinated. Curriculum and standards development strategies have been developed whereby all future performance agreement negotiation between the Authority and national Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs) will include funding for competency standards development. This will act as a trigger for curriculum development and allow curriculum developers to gain an overview and closer understanding of the standards under development. This process will be co-ordinated through the Standards and Curriculum Council. The Council should, as a future priority, provide advice on the means by which at an early stage, the resource impact resulting from standards and curriculum development can be identified and assessed.

National Recognition

2.13 Over the past two years State/ Territory recognition authorities have agreed on measures to raise their performance and effectiveness in the context of a system of national recognition. The new Council's role in overseeing the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) and in the implementation of the new qualifications framework in the vocational education and training sector, will give greater focus for this work and ensure more effective co-ordination of NFROT. In addition, the Council will ensure consistency in the application of NFROT.

2.14 Ministers have previously endorsed the work of State/ Territory recognition authorities in providing common formats for accreditation, registration, incorporation of short courses under NFROT, a national code of practice, a national protocol for registration across State /Territory borders and mutually recognising courses accredited prior to the implementation of NFROT.

Client Services Standards

2.15 Delays in accreditation processes are inefficient and can discourage enterprise and industry involvement. Client Service Standards have been developed to assist recognition authorities to provide their services with accuracy, consistency, promptness, efficiency, courtesy and necessary confidentiality. Ministers are asked to endorse these Client Service Standards.

2.16 There is also a need to ensure that further work takes place: for example, the development of a national policy on fees and charges in relation to recognition processes, clarification of curriculum copyright and the upgrading of the national registers. The upgrading of the national registers will need to focus on making the presentation of information more user friendly and accessible to clients. Upgrading will also lead to the development of a data base with common coding systems to allow users to generate a single report from the currently separate registers.

Final Proposals

That Ministers:

(i) agree that the National Training Board (NTB) is to cease functioning and the current NTB Memorandum of Understanding is to be discontinued from 1 July 1995, with the NTB to be liquidated as quickly as is feasible after that date.

(ii) under paragraph 6 (3) (b) of the *Australian National Training Authority Act 1992*, consent to the conferral on the Australian National Training Authority from 1 July 1995 of the functions listed in paragraphs 14 and 16 of the document "Principles and Operating Guidelines for the Standards and Curriculum Council and the National Staff Development Committee".

(iii) agree to the "Principles and Operating Guidelines for the Standards and Curriculum Council and the National Staff Development Committee" (previously circulated for out of session clearance) and to a review of the Council and Committee at a time to be determined by Ministers.

(iv) agree:

(a) that a Memorandum of Understanding be entered into between the members of ACTRAC Products Limited and ANTA to link the operation of the company with the policies of the Authority and the Ministerial Council;

(b) **that the broader function of marketing products of the Standards and Curriculum Council be conferred on the company, to be exercised, where relevant, in consultation with the VET bodies responsible for co-ordination of international marketing; and**

(c) **that consequential amendments be made to the company's Memorandum of Association.**

(v) **agree on Client Service Standards (Appendix 1).**

(vi) **agree that the Standards and Curriculum Council, in conjunction with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, develop a nationally compatible database of competency standards, accredited courses, short courses, recognised training programs and registered providers and advise on a timetable for implementation.**

3. Improving the Quality of VET

3.1 The core business of the vocational education and training system is the provision of high quality training services and products. An over-reliance on procedures, frameworks and protocols can serve to mask achievement of performance targets. The challenge, therefore, has been to improve the quality and consistency of the product whilst simultaneously encouraging greater diversity and adaptation. This is a difficult challenge, but one that is at the core of many public sector reforms today. It can perhaps be characterised as devolving responsibility whilst increasing quality assurance. The Authority is proposing that this be achieved by less emphasis on 'front end' regulation and a greater focus on outcomes, devolution and provision of reliable information on services and performance.

3.2 The past ten years have seen a push for national consistency for government policy objectives such as company and security law trade practices law and occupational health and safety law. These changes have come largely in response to concerns from industry that, for companies trading in more than one Australian State or Territory, the differences between State-based regulations are inefficient if not unworkable. Whilst the national training registers and associated processes are practice rather than law, the same principle holds. As more and more enterprises take responsibility for delivering recognised training programs and the mobility of the workforce increases, the

imperative for nationally consistent recognition processes will inevitably increase.

3.3 The proposals outlined in this paper seek to build an effective system of national recognition while devolving responsibility for endorsement of competency standards and accreditation of courses.

Devolving Responsibility

3.4 Competency standards indicate required knowledge and skill and the application of that knowledge and skill to the standards of performance required in the workplace. They are statements of outcome and are at the heart of the training reforms.

3.5 The Standards Transition Team has further developed the proposals put forward by the Authority at the September Ministerial Council. To give effect to the Authority's proposals to streamline the standards development process and to gain greater industry ownership and acceptance, the Standards and Curriculum Council should give 'best practice' Competency Standards Bodies (CSBs) delegation to endorse their own standards within an agreed framework. Ministers are asked to endorse the criteria for this to occur.

3.6 While, over time, all CSBs should meet the criteria, a number have indicated that they would prefer to continue to work within the current framework. The Council will need to carefully manage this process to ensure that both the delegation pathway to endorsement and the direct endorsement by the Council produces outcomes of equal, and increasing, quality.

3.7 Similar proposals requiring Ministers' endorsement have been developed to underpin the delegation of course accreditation to providers and industry bodies. A number of States and Territories are already moving down this track.

3.8 For the long term success of these reforms, it is important to ensure that any delegation of authority in either accreditation or registration to one body exclusively in an industry does not result in a monopoly approach. Bodies receiving delegated status must also meet client service standards applying to central agencies, in particular ensuring that courses meet competency standards' requirements under NFROT. The operational aspects of the delegations therefore need to be considered in the context of quality assurance processes and possible conflict of interest. The Standards and Curriculum Council, in respect of standards endorsement, and State/Territory recognition authorities in respect of accreditation, should maintain rights of appeal processes for aggrieved parties.

3.9 It is important to recognise that these proposals involve a devolution of functions not abrogation of responsibilities. The new Council, as well as State/Territory recognition authorities, will have a vital role to play in ensuring the quality of outcomes under these new arrangements. Decisions on delegation of these functions should therefore be transparent and based on advice from an independent review process involving the relevant stakeholders and leading practitioners. Decisions taken should be based solely on the capacity of the body seeking delegation to meet the relevant criteria. This process should not be overly complex or bureaucratic and should be aimed at raising quality and performance. There are effective models of quality assurance in operation in professional and other areas to draw on in this regard.

Final Proposals

That Ministers:

(vii) agree to the Standards and Curriculum Council delegating to recognised Competency Standards Bodies, including enterprises and industry bodies, which meet the specific criteria, the authority to directly endorse their own standards.

(viii) agree to the criteria for delegation by the new Council of endorsement of competency standards (Appendix 2).

(ix) agree that delegation to endorse their own competency standards should not be given to cross-industry Competency Standard Bodies/ Lead Agencies at this stage, except in an area of exclusive coverage.

(x) agree that the Council monitor the delegation function, in particular to ensure that both the delegation pathway to endorsement and direct endorsement by the Council, produce outcomes of equal quality that increase over time.

(xi) agree to a set of Principles for Accreditation of Courses under Delegation (Appendix 3).

Assessment

3.10 Assessment outcomes are another key quality assurance mechanism. Industry, enterprises, public and private providers need to be able to interrelate so that the parties can have confidence that assessment for the purposes of national recognition has validity, integrity and mutual acceptance leading to a nationally recognised qualification issued under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

3.11 While assessment of competencies is carried out for a variety of purposes it was considered important to establish a framework to guide the development of flexible assessment models and practices for use by industry. A set of national arrangements for assessment has been drawn up for Ministers' consideration which will seek to maintain nationally consistent outcomes of training where these are sought.

3.12 These arrangements take endorsed competency standards as the basis for assessment and in so doing allow assessment to take place on the basis of competencies achieved, regardless of how they have been acquired. This is important in order to ensure that there are consistent outcomes between institution and industry based training.

3.13 If assessment processes do not have the confidence of industry and of those issuing qualifications, the integrity of the system for recognised training will be lost. Assessment processes must be readily available, fair, reliable and relevant to the appropriate competency standard. Quality assurance is the key. Individuals involved in assessment must abide by quality assurance mechanisms and must meet personal levels of competency in their field.

3.14 Assessment arrangements will vary from industry to industry and recommendations have also been made to encourage the development of industry assessment models. It is important that these arrangements are developed in consultation with providers to guarantee understanding and acceptance and that they are approved by State/Territory Training or Recognition Authorities to guarantee recognition under NFROT. Some industries are well advanced in the development and implementation of these models.

3.15 The Assessment Transition Team was not able to deal with the issue of funding of assessment in the time available. The Authority proposes to progress this work as a matter of priority in the context of its advice to Ministers last year that there would seem to be a strong case for some support to be provided to underpin assessment processes in non-institutional settings and for recognition of prior learning where nationally recognised outcomes are sought.

3.16 Given that the same outcomes and benefits apply, it would seem inequitable that one assessment pathway - through publicly funded institutions - should be almost fully subsidised while clients are expected to meet virtually the full costs of non-institutional assessment and recognition of prior learning. Some sharing of the cost would seem reasonable where assessment services are being provided on a non-profit basis.

3.17 While there is emerging agreement among the various parties on major assessment issues, there is still considerable work to be done in a range of areas. However, a number of useful agreements have been made. The Transition Team agreed on the importance of evidence guides as necessary components of all competency standards development and the Authority strongly supports the development of partnerships between enterprises and providers in the provision of assessment services and the development of approved arrangements on an industry-by-industry basis.

Final Proposals

That Ministers:

(xii) agree to national arrangements for assessment for the purposes of issuing a qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (Appendix 4).

(xiii) agree to the requirement that individuals involved in assessment for national recognition be competent against the national assessor standards and competent in the area being assessed, or other quality assurance mechanisms approved by State/Territory Training or Recognition Authorities as outlined in Proposal (xiv).

(xiv) agree to the Standards and Curriculum Council facilitating the development of assessment models by industry in consultation with registered providers, leading to the establishment of assessment arrangements which result in full recognition under NFROT. These arrangements to be approved by State/Territory Training or Recognition Authorities.

(xv) agree that ANTA, in consultation with States, Territories and the Commonwealth, provide advice to the next Ministerial Council meeting on funding of, and charges for, assessment having regard to access and equity issues.

4. Promoting Diversity and Relevance

4.1 The Authority believes that promoting diversity and relevance is necessary to lessen the gap between providers and clients. Indeed, it is only through these mechanisms that the system can effectively meet the differing expectations and needs of a broad range of individuals and enterprises. There are a number of strategies proposed to increase diversity in the system and to build closer links between training providers and their clients.

Competition and 'User Choice'

4.2 The recent Council of Australian Governments' agreement recognises that one of the key mechanisms to increase diversity is competition. Competition can be an effective trigger for organisations to improve services, reduce costs, and focus attention away from internal concerns and onto the concerns of their customers. It is also the mechanism increasingly used by governments to encourage diversity of service provision - diversity which is created when providers adapt to meet specific markets.

4.3 Ministers have often affirmed the goal of an open and competitive market place for public, private and industry training providers. Prior to the Hilmer Report recommendations and the determinations of the Council of Australian Governments to adopt a framework of competition in reform of government activities and services, States and Territories were already working to open up the training market through a number of strategies. This is happening through arrangements such as open tendering, strategic alliances between TAFE and non-TAFE providers and preferred supplier arrangements. The Authority estimates that $21 million has been set aside for these purposes in 1995, an increase of approximately 65 percent over 1994 funding.

4.4 Yet these initiatives all originate from government-based planning processes. They are necessary reforms, but not sufficient. The missing link is between the users of the system - enterprises and learners - and the direct provision of training. It was clear from the consultations undertaken during the review, that industry in particular was actively seeking a greater influence, not only on who provides training, but also on how it is provided.

4.5 The mechanism developed to kick-start consumer demand has been called 'user choice'. The user choice pilots will be targeted to employers of apprentices and trainees. In essence, the user choice approach will allow enterprises to choose who provides publicly funded off-the-job training for their apprentices and trainees. When a business places

trainees and apprentices with a particular provider - whether a TAFE institution or other registered provider - the appropriate government funding will be paid to the provider by the State /Territory Training Authority.

4.6 The rationale behind user choice is to place training decisions at the point of demand rather than supply. In making decisions about the placement of their employees in particular programs, enterprises will provide clear demand signals which have the capacity to impact on mainstream recurrently funded training. User choice arrangements reduce the distance between providers, on the one hand, and enterprises who employ students, on the other hand. User choice provides an ability to negotiate for customised, relevant training services.

4.7 Guiding principles for the introduction of user choice arrangements to be piloted across Australia have been developed. While Ministers are asked to endorse the principles developed to guide the pilots, States and Territories have already commenced the pilot process in response to a discussion paper developed by the User Choice Transition Team. However, there has been considerable variety in the nature of those responses with some confusion evident between the concept of user choice and the more general tendering of public funding. The user choice proposal was endorsed in-principle by Ministers in November 1994, limiting time for development of pilots for 1995. Nonetheless, the response on the whole has been disappointing. For the principles to be effectively tested, pilots need to be conducted in all States and Territories and in a broad range of industries including those not traditionally involved in recognised training.

4.8 It is therefore proposed that the pilots form part of the 1996 - 1997 State/Territories Training Profile agreements with each State and Territory, with evaluations to be completed by the end of 1996. If outcomes are successful the principles should be extended to new areas in the following years.

4.9 To allow effective testing of the concept of user choice, a number of pilots should be targeted to areas of training where the market is already more contestable, such as hospitality, computing and business studies. Group Training Companies could also be appropriately targeted. Pilots should be designed to allow for choice in delivery and course content matters.

4.10 The user choice approach could also be introduced to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, in which case, choice would more properly be exercised by the community as a whole and not just the individual.

Final Proposals

That Ministers:

(xvi) agree to the User Choice Principles (Appendix 5).

(xvii) agree to the inclusion of user choice pilots in the 1996 - 1997 State/Territory Training Profiles with the objective of testing the principles in all States and Territories and across diverse industries.

The Australian Standards Framework (ASF)

4.11 The ASF is a set of benchmarks used to distinguish between levels of competency and to then allow competency levels to be related to qualifications. In the lead up to, and during the review process there was considerable debate about the nature and role of the ASF. In the Authority's report to Ministers in September 1994, it was proposed that the ASF be retained and reviewed to ensure that it could be applied flexibly to meet industry and enterprise needs. The role of the ASF needs to be clarified. In particular, the new Council in facilitating the development of standards, should emphasise that the ASF is a tool to be used at the end of the standards development process.

4.12 In addition, a matrix presentation of the descriptors has been developed as an addition to aid flexibility in applying the descriptors to diverse industries and workplaces. The matrix is an elaboration of the ASF descriptors and has been developed and 'tested' with a range of CSBs. It makes the ASF more useful for some industries and enterprises and provides a clear and straightforward separation against which groups of units of competency can be separately considered leading to an overall profile for aligning the groups of units of competency against the ASF. Some CSBs found the matrix appropriate to their needs; others indicated a desire to continue with the current text version.

4.13 The Authority recommends to Ministers that the descriptors for the ASF should be able to be applied using two complementary versions: the current text version and its elaborated form, the matrix version.

Increasing Relevance of Curriculum

4.14 Customisation of curricula is another key mechanism to promote diversity and relevance. Customisation enables courses to be tailored to meet the needs of enterprises, industry sectors and individual learners without the necessity for those courses to be individually re-presented for accreditation. This will enable diverse client needs to be met whilst

ensuring that the original integrity of courses is preserved. Previous avoidance and lack of attention to this issue has, in part, resulted in a tendency for enterprises and industry to avoid nationally recognised courses and for differing practices to apply.

4.15 Creating clear guidelines for customisation of curriculum will enable courses to be tailored to meet specific needs while ensuring national recognition. It should increase the quantum of recognised training undertaken. Guidelines have been drawn up for Ministers' consideration which specify the ways in which existing accredited courses can be customised. The guidelines also specify how new courses can be designed for easy further adaptation. Where national recognition is to be granted for a customised course, State/Territories recognition authorities should ensure that the guidelines have been met before placing the course on the national register.

Final Proposals

That Ministers:

(xviii) agree the Australian Standards Framework (ASF) should be presented in Standards and Curriculum Council documentation and guidance material with descriptors in two complementary versions which are presented to aid clarity and flexibility in use:

- **the current text version used by the current National Training Board; and**
- **the revised six characteristic matrix version, which is an elaboration of the ASF (Appendix 6).**

(xix) agree that the Standards and Curriculum Council should clarify the process for alignment of competency standards to the ASF, emphasising that the alignment process occurs at the end of standards development.

(xx) agree to the Customisation Guidelines (Appendix 7).

4.16 During the period that transition teams were undertaking their specific tasks, a number of other activities were taking place to implement the *Proposals for More Effective Implementation of Training Reforms*.

Industrial Relations and Training

4.17 The Authority was pleased to note that the industry parties comprising the Joint Industry Training and Education Council (JITEC) have now finalised an agreement on training and industrial relations issues (Appendix 8). The promotion and adoption of the principles outlined in the statement should assist in clarifying the relationship between training schemes and industrial relations issues, which has been a source of concern to employers.

Information and Staff Development

4.18 The NSW 'TRAIN' project provides a 'fax to fax' service. It supplies information to clients on all aspects of training reform and offers a comprehensive referral service. It was developed in response to the need identified in the Authority's report in September 1994 for accurate and timely advice to clients and staff. It is proposed to now broaden this project into a national service and to make the information available through computer based services including Internet.

4.19 Another activity to provide a range of information and services to clients is underway through the work of the National Staff Development Committee. The Committee is developing a major staff development program to train vocational education and training staff in the processes and implications of the implementation of training reforms.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The recommendations endorsed by Ministers in September 1994 formed an agreed framework for implementation. The work carried out since by the Authority through the Transition Teams, and the Implementation Group, has given scope and substance to those proposals.

5.2 New arrangements are proposed and new responsibilities have been developed. Issues and tensions will inevitably arise in the bedding down of these new proposed arrangements, but the goodwill which has grown through the development process augurs well for a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

5.3 The Authority is grateful to the many individuals who have made a contribution to the work of the Transition Teams and the Implementation Group. The Authority will, subject to Ministers' agreement, convene two further meetings of the Implementation Group to review progress over the remainder of this year and to provide ongoing reports to Ministers and to major stakeholders.

5.4 The Authority believes that the outcome of these proposals, if adopted and effectively implemented, will create an environment for a more responsive and flexible vocational education and training system, focussed on meeting the needs of its clients.

Final Proposal

That Ministers:

(xxi) agree that ANTA convene two further meetings of the Implementation Committee and that ANTA report on progress with implementation of the agreed measures at future meetings of the Ministerial Council in 1995.

APPENDIX 1

CLIENT SERVICE STANDARDS

Introduction

These Client Service Standards deal with accreditation and registration.

The accreditation process provides for formal recognition of a course, training program or short course by the State/Territory recognition authority in accordance with the principles of NFROT.

The registration process provides for formal recognition of training providers by the State/Territory Recognition Authority that a provider wishing to deliver accredited courses, training programs or short courses meets the requirements of NFROT.

Accreditation and registration are preceded by:

- *a course development process based on industry consultation to establish requirements and presented as an accreditation submission in accordance with the principles. (note: a 'course' includes a training program, short course or module)*
- *a review of the quality of the accreditation and/or registration proposal.*

Quality

1. All recognition will be based on the Principles of NFROT and nationally agreed polices and procedures.

2. States/Territories and delegated bodies will provide a quality assurance process to ensure standards and quality outcomes.

Promptness and Efficiency

3. Requests by clients for accreditation and registration applications and information packages should be despatched within 24 hours of the request being received.

4. Clients applying for accreditation and/or registration will be advised within 10 working days if applications are inappropriate for assessment. Clients will be informed of the reasons.

5. Courses will be accredited and providers will be registered within 20 working days of assessment that applications comply fully with all relevant NFROT principles. Clients will be informed of any reasons for delay.

6. Clients will be informed of the best way to submit complete and concise accreditation and/or registration documents.

7. Recognition authorities and delegated bodies, where appropriate, and in order to contain clients' costs, will promote the wider delivery of nationally recognised courses and will provide advice on copyright issues.

Accuracy and Consistency

8. States/Territories' recognition authorities will ensure clients are fully informed of accreditation/registration requirements.

9. All persons involved in accreditation and registration against NFROT, other than those persons contributing subject-specific expertise, should have appropriate skills and knowledge.

10. Liaison to be continued amongst recognition authorities and delegated bodies to maintain consistent approaches to accreditation/registration.

11. Where accreditation and/or registration is performed by a number of bodies under delegation from the principal agency, quality assurance processes should be instituted to ensure consistency of decisions.

Client Relations

12. All clients will be treated with courtesy and respect and every effort made to identify and appropriately respond to their needs.

13. Course developers' and providers' rights of ownership of intellectual property will be protected.

14. Clients will be informed of their right of appeal in relation to accreditation and/or registration decisions.

DELEGATION OF ENDORSEMENT OF COMPETENCY STANDARDS

1. Criteria for a CSB to obtain delegation to endorse its competency standards

The criteria for obtaining a delegation would be as follows. The CSB must have:

- one or more sets of competency standards endorsed by the NTB or its successor Council as meeting quality requirements, and evidence of acceptance and usage by relevant industry(s) and enterprises of those endorsed standards;

- documented processes and plans to maintain quality and relevance, in particular covering:

  - involvement of stakeholders;
  - consultation with relevant parties including other relevant CSBs;
  - achievement of the requirements for quality competency standards;
  - validation of the standards developed, including in enterprises; and
  - ensuring standards are implemented, maintained and reviewed, including monitoring their suitability;

- evidence of ongoing financial and organisational viability of the organisation and demonstration of its ongoing good standing;

- competent and experienced personnel, or access to them, in areas of:

  - standards development and validation;
  - project management; and
  - assessing the downstream useability and value of the standards;

- support of the stakeholders in the industry (or enterprise or across industry) for obtaining the delegation; and

- a willingness to be audited at any time, and acceptance that the delegation status will be reviewed in the range of two to five years, with five years being the maximum and linked to review of CSB status.

Careful consideration would need to be given by the new Council to the implications of delegation where it ran across the coverage of a range of industry bodies, and as to how they would be effectively involved.

2. Outline of what is meant by a quality competency standard for endorsement

Criteria for quality competency standards when they are initially developed fall into three areas:

- Content - covering what is in the standards and their relationship to user needs;
- Technical - covering the way standards are expressed and aligned to the ASF; and
- Process - covering how the standards were developed and validated.

A fourth area covers additional criteria for an ongoing quality standard, which is:

- Useability - covering suitability for the range of applications for standards.

Following is an outline of the types of quality criteria that are regarded as appropriate to each area:

Content quality requirements

- Cover the range of functions which are meaningful in the workplace and appropriate to either enterprise, industry or cross-industry application.
- Full expression of competency, specifically the four components:
  - task skills;
  - task management skills;
  - contingency management skills; and
  - job/role environment skills.
- Appropriate incorporation of underlying knowledge, and handling of attitudes and values in a way that focused on outcomes achieved rather than views of the individual.
- Incorporation of Key Competencies including language, literacy and numeracy competencies and other endorsed industry or cross-industry standards where they are relevant for application, plus relevant general competencies (such as in areas of occupational health and safety and, where relevant, regulatory and licensing requirements).
- Avoidance of bias and discrimination.

- Outcome focused, oriented to future requirements of industry and capable of flexible use by enterprises.

Technical quality requirements

- Organisation of the information on competency into the common format for expressing competency standards established by the NTB.

- Alignment of groups of units of competency standards to the Australian Standards Framework (ASF) to enable meaningful groupings of units of competency to be defined in ways which meet industry or enterprise workplace needs, and provide a basis for development of training and the award of qualifications linked to the ASF level.

Process quality requirements

- Involvement of stakeholders in the enterprise, industry or cross-industry grouping that is developing the competency standards.

- Consultation with affected and relevant organisations and people, including industry and cross-industry CSBs with relevant or overlapping standards.

- Effective methodologies for the development of the competency standards.

- An inclusive approach to equity groups.

- Validation of the standards, including in enterprises.

- Mapping of the relationship between the standards and other industry and cross-industry standards where they are used or there is an overlap.

- A plan for the implementation, maintenance and review of the standards that includes meeting suitable quality requirements.

Useability quality requirements

These requirements relate to standards after their initial endorsement, and to quality in implementation.

There would be areas that are also considered when reviewing a delegation to endorse going as they do to the quality of the maintenance of the standards. Quality standards that are being used should be able to demonstrate the following:

- Appropriateness for the range of industry and enterprise uses of the standards.

- Effectiveness in guiding the development of curriculum and course and training program design including achievement of accreditation and recognition of training based on the standards and appropriateness as a basis for qualifications.

- Ability to be assessed against and reliability of the outcomes, including through recognition of prior learning.

- Promotion of:

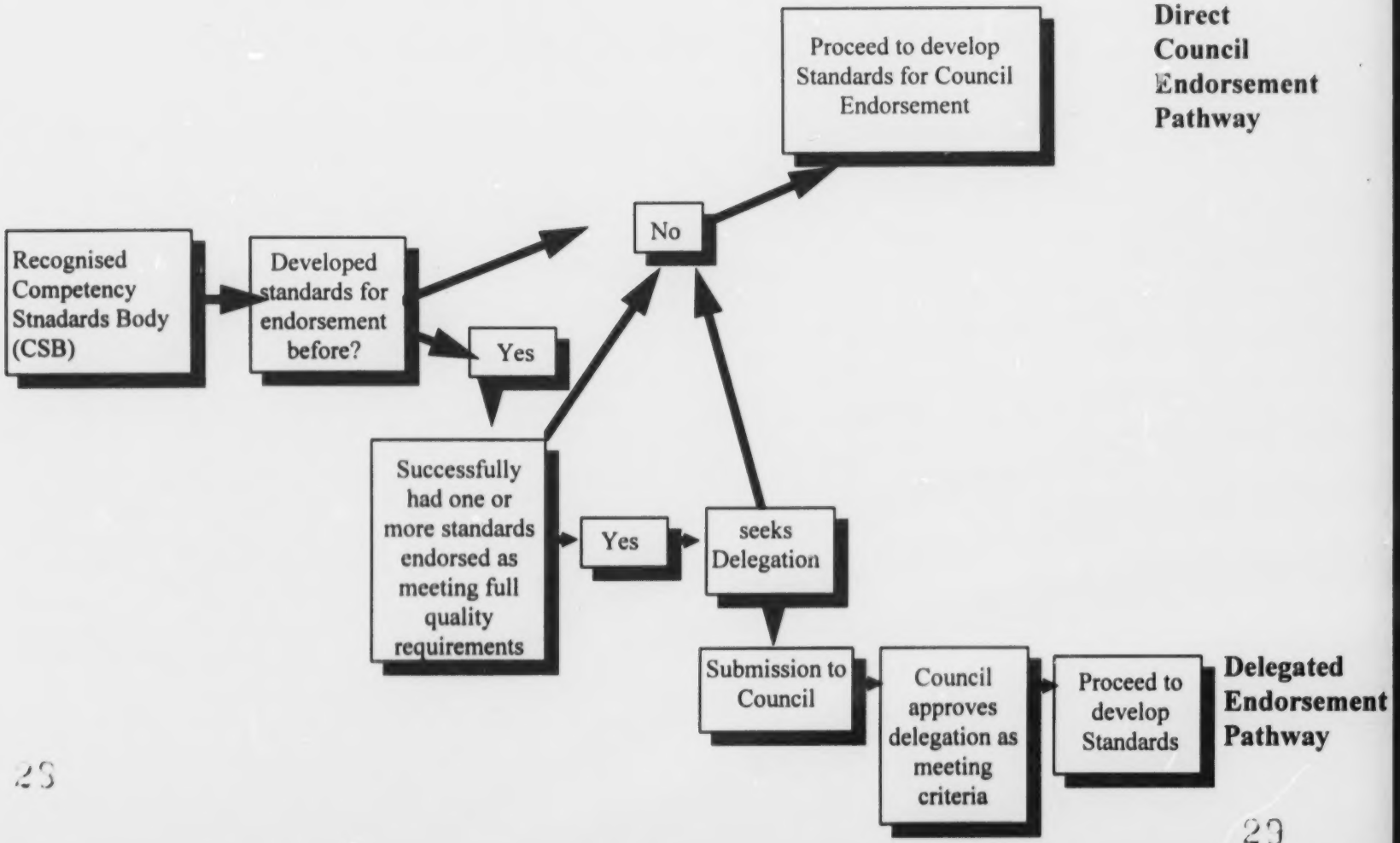
  - efficient usage of training resources;
  - career paths;
  - transferability and portability;
  - varied learning pathways; and
  - equity and access.

- Relationship to regulatory requirements.

The criteria for obtaining the delegation to endorse will need to be clearly expressed as benchmarks by the new Council, which should ensure an emphasis on the achievement of quality competency standards is maintained.

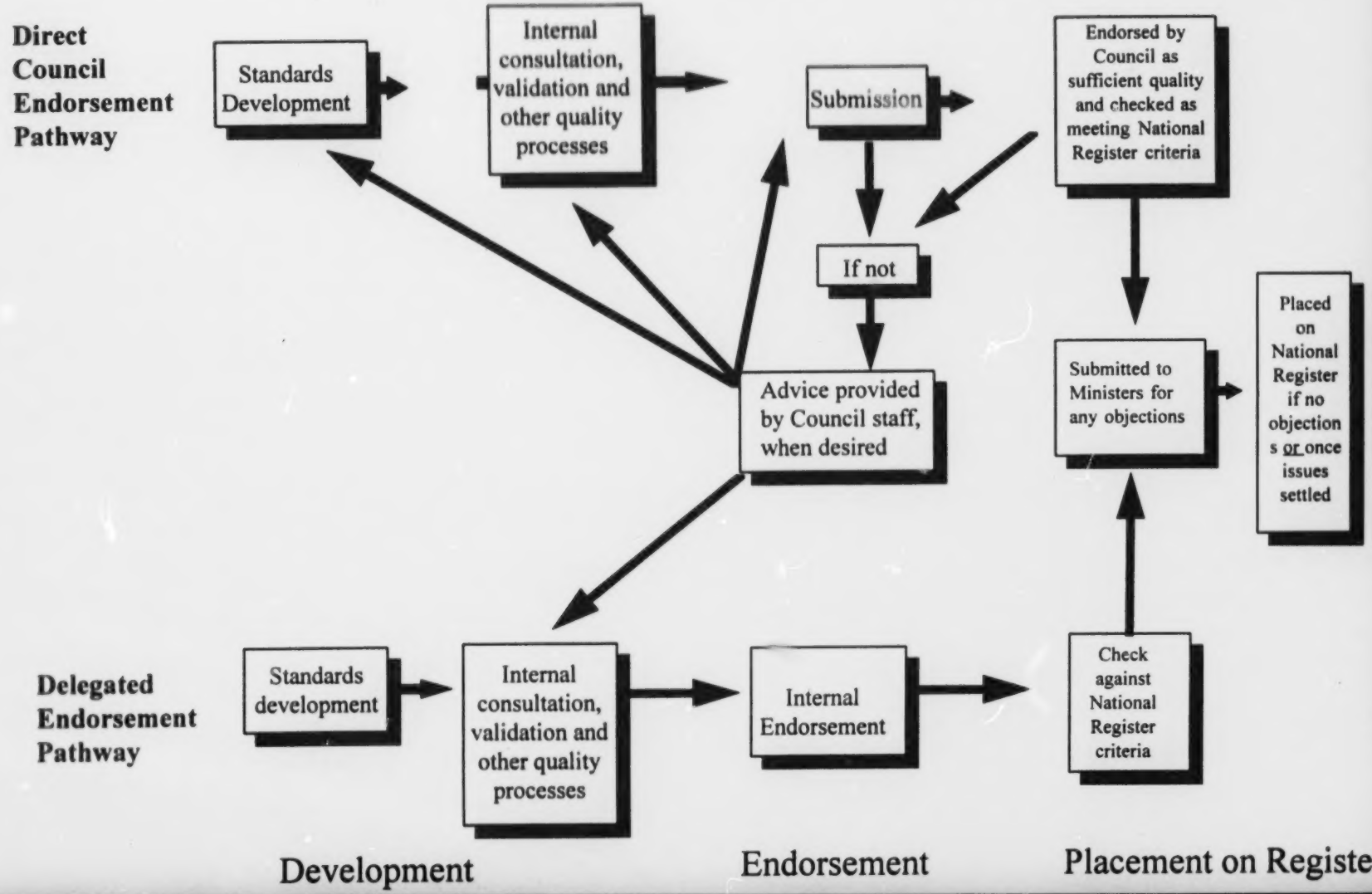
The flowchart attached summarises how the parallel endorsement processes would work.

Delegation to Bodies to Endorse their own Standards


Recognised Competency Stnadards Body (CSB)
Developed standards for endorsement before?
No
Proceed to develop Standards for Council Endorsement
Direct Council Endorsement Pathway
Yes
Successfully had one or more standards endorsed as meeting full quality requirements
Yes
seeks Delegation
Submission to Council
Council approves delegation as meeting criteria
Proceed to develop Standards
Delegated Endorsement Pathway

23

Endorsement Process for Standards


Direct Council Endorsement Pathway
Standards Development
Internal consultation, validation and other quality processes
Submission
Endorsed by Council as sufficient quality and checked as meeting National Register criteria
If not
Advice provided by Council staff, when desired
Submitted to Ministers for any objections
Placed on National Register if no objections or once issues settled
Delegated Endorsement Pathway
Standards development
Internal consultation, validation and other quality processes
Internal Endorsement
Check against National Register criteria
Development
Endorsement
Placement on Register

PRINCIPLES FOR ACCREDITATION OF COURSES UNDER DELEGATION

Principle 1

The delegated body must satisfy the State recognition authority of its capacity to undertake the responsibilities and fulfil all requirements of a delegated body.

Principle 2

Assessment panels/course advisory committees will provide for appropriate industry representation.

Principle 3

All accreditations must meet the Principles of NFROT and be in the form of nationally agreed templates.

Principle 4

The delegated body must meet nationally agreed guidelines for client service standards.

Principle 5

The State/Territory recognition authority maintains an audit/quality assurance process with the delegated body.

Principle 6

The State/Territories will determine the extent to which delegation will be given on a case by case basis. This may allow for partial delegation where a body cannot meet all of the responsibilities and requirements for accreditation.

Principle 7

Fees and charges imposed by the delegated body will comply with national fees guidelines where applicable.

Principle 8

The Principal agency will provide a process of appeal for aggrieved parties.

Principle 9

The State/Territory recognition authority will provide all entries on the national registers.

Principles 10

The State/Territory recognition authority will provide relevant polices and procedures.

NOTE *The delegated body can only accredit their own courses except where the body has the authority to accredit on behalf of industry.*

APPENDIX 4

ARRANGEMENTS FOR ASSESSMENT FOR NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF COMPETENCIES

It is recognised that assessments are undertaken for a variety of purposes and in a wide range of settings, many of which do not lead to national recognition of the competencies and the issuing of a qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). These arrangements are intended to underpin assessments which lead to national recognition of competencies and the issuing of a qualification under the AQF. They are not intended to replace the NFROT Principles for Assessment but to build upon them and provide information to those establishing assessment arrangements so that they are able to make informed decisions about the arrangements and the processes to be implemented.

1. Assessments undertaken within accredited courses/ training programs, non-accredited training programs or for competencies development purposes, should ensure individuals are competent against the endorsed competency standards where they exist.

2. Assessment within accredited courses/ training programs should lead to national recognition of competenciesunder the AQF.

3. Assessment outside of accredited courses/ training programs can lead to national recognition of competencies, if appropriate quality assurance mechanisms are in place.

4. Assessment for national recognition of competencies should be undertaken by, or auspiced through, a registered provider. Alternatively other quality assurance mechanisms should be approved by the State/Territory Training/Recognition Authority.

5. A statement of attainment or qualification, recognised under the AQF and displaying the NFROT logo, should be issued when an individual is assessed as competent against the endorsed competency standards. This would be through a registered provider, or where other quality assurance mechanisms are in place which are approved by the State Training/Recognition Authority.

6. Recognition of prior learning processes and partnership arrangements between enterprises and registered providers should be developed to assist individuals gain national recognition of their competencies under the AQF.

APPENDIX 5

PRINCIPLES FOR USER CHOICE PILOTS

Relationship Between Provider and Client

1. "User choice" pilots should primarily be directed to enhancing client focussed arrangements between providers, employers and employees/students. This may include improved integration of on and off-the-job training, 'customisation' of entry level training to enterprise needs, negotiation of delivery arrangements better suited to enterprise requirements and sharing of technology between enterprises and providers.

Influence and Competition

2. In recognition of the fact that the training market is not fully competitive in all areas of training and in all parts of Australia the "user choice" pilots should include the following variants and characteristics:

   - a number of pilots should be targeted to those areas of training provision where the market is more fully contestable, such as hospitality, business and computing studies. This is more likely to engage a broader range of providers and test "user choice" in more leading edge areas of training provision;

   - pilots should test the broadest principles of "user choice", that is firms should be able to negotiate not just the provider of choice but also delivery and course content matters. This is likely to be the major characteristic of pilots conducted in parts of Australia where the number of alternative providers is limited; and

   - pilots could be considered outside contracts of training to ensure that all client groups of VET are included in the trialing process. For example, different strategies may need to be pursued in WA and the NT where there are large communities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait clients of the system but which may have no involvement in VET provision based on contracts of training.

Information

3. Dissemination of appropriate information on which to base choice should be a key characteristic of the pilot process:

   - Full information on provider and course options, including RPL arrangements, should be made available to all participants in the pilot process;

   - Communication of benefits to firms and employees of the benefits and outcomes which should arise from their participation in the pilot process;

   - Pilots could be used to develop a range of outcomes measures which will enable more informed consumer choices over time; and

   - Concurrent research into the range of conditions most likely to support "user choice" should be conducted with the pilots. Victoria would be prepared to conduct this as part of its National Projects funding, in conjunction with other interested States and Territories;

   - Each State and Territory should co-ordinate collection and dissemination of examples of existing "user choice" arrangements.

Focus on Decisions by Firms - Employers and Employees Exercising Choice

4. "User choice" pilots are to be primarily targeted at decisions made by firms and their employees. The only exceptions to this may be in the case of remote communities, and in these cases the community would exercise the choice not the individuals.

   "User choice" pilots should be used to investigate ways of more effectively integrating on and off-the-job training for apprentices and trainees.

Differing Capacity of Firms to Participate in 'User Choice'

5. "User choice" pilots should seek to cover firms of varying size. Group Training Companies may provide the most appropriate mechanism for small to medium sized enterprises. Promotion of "user choice" to, and by, Group Training Companies will be a critical part of the pilot program.

REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS FRAMEWORK (ASF)

ASF Descriptors

There should be two complementary versions of the ASF descriptors.

Text Version:

The current text ASF.

Matrix Version:

This matrix approach has the characteristics disaggregated into six groupings, which are:

- autonomy;
- responsibility and accountability;
- complexity of skill and knowledge;
- contexts for application;
- choice and range of contingencies; and
- discretion and judgement.

This approach provides a clear and straightforward separation of characteristics against which the groups of units of competency can be separately considered, leading to an overall profile for the groups of units of competency against the ASF.

Alignment Process

Guidance on the alignment process needs to be clear that:

- only groups of units of competency are aligned, and not individual units; and
- only those levels of the ASF that are relevant to the competencies need to be used, and not all levels.

Stages of Competency Standards Development

1. Unit of Competency Development Stage:

A. The overall range of functions that competency standards are being developed for are identified.

B. An idea is developed of how groupings of functions within the overall range relate to how work is performed, that is, to actual groupings meaningful in the workplace that can be used in a range of approaches to work organisation. Some thinking about broad levels among the areas for development of competencies may occur here also.

C. Analysis is carried out of the competencies required.

D. Individual units of competency are established based on the data.

2. 'Packaging' of Units of Competency into Meaningful Groups Stage:

E. Units of competency are 'packaged' into groups/combinations that are meaningful in the workplace, that is, based on the data they are put together in the ways competencies need to be together to actually carry out work.

3. Alignment of Groups of Units of Competency Stage:

F. The groups of units established are then considered for their relationship to the ASF level descriptors.

4. Approach to Alignment:

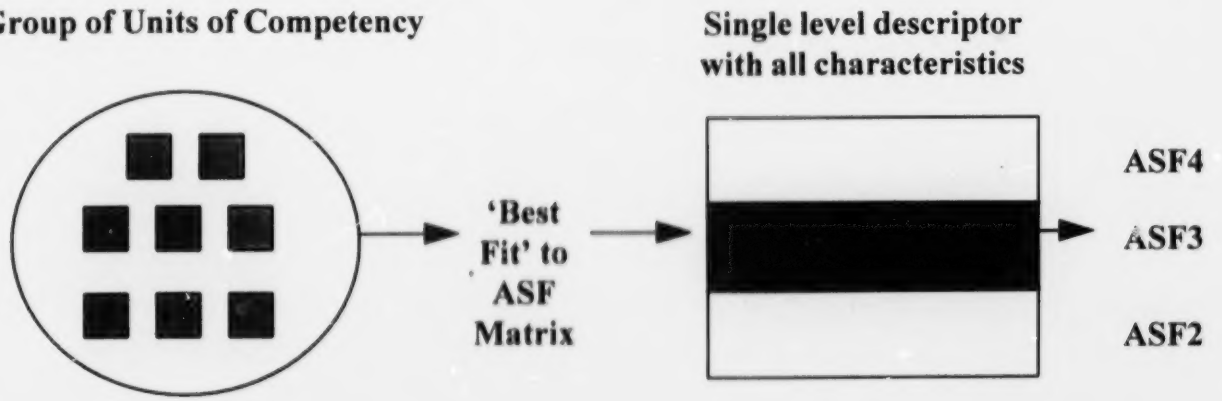
G. The group of units is considered against the whole descriptor for each level if the text version of the ASF is used, and the 'best fit' to a level is found. If the matrix version of the ASF is used, the group of units is considered against each grouping of characteristics (which form a cell in the matrix) as presented for each level and the 'best fit' to each grouping (a cell) is found.

H. The extra step in the matrix approach is that after deciding a level for the group of units against each grouping of characteristics (cells at a level in the matrix) a 'profile' will have emerged of the group of competencies being at certain levels for certain characteristics. These may not all be at the same level. A judgement is then made about the 'best fit' to an overall ASF level.

The process for alignment, in essence, is that once units of competency have been developed, the industry or enterprise decides the grouping of units meaningful to it, then decides which ASF level is the 'best fit' for each grouping that is regarded as setting out the requirements for competency in the workplace. It is important to remember that only those ASF levels that are relevant to the competencies need to be used. There is no requirement in relation to either the ASF or the Qualifications Framework to use all levels. The attached diagrams illustrate the process.

Alignment Using Different Models of ASF Descriptors

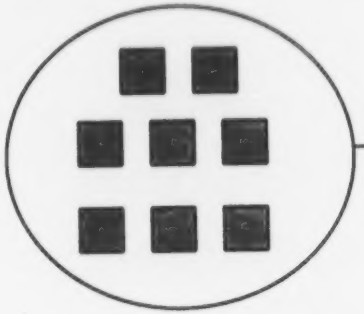
Text Descriptor Approach - Text Version (Current System)



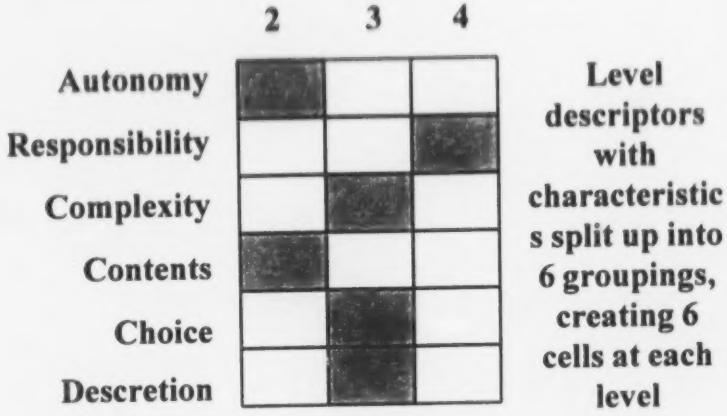
Alignment Using Different Models of ASF Descriptors

Matrix Descriptor Approach - Matrix Version

Group of Units of Competency



'Best Fit' to ASF Matrix



Level descriptors with characteristics split up into 6 groupings, creating 6 cells at each level

then decide

'Best Fit' to ASF (overall) → ASF3

APPENDIX 7

CUSTOMISATION GUIDELINES

Accreditation of vocational education and training in Australia is carried out under the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT), one principle of which is that:

> *Courses submitted for accreditation shall provide for customisation to meet the particular needs of clients and at the same time preserve the integrity of the course.*

Customisation enables courses to be tailored to meet the needs of enterprises, industry sectors and individual learners without the necessity for the courses being re-presented for accreditation as distinct courses in their own right. These guidelines address:

- the initial design of a course to enhance its capacity to be customised; and
- the ways in which existing accredited courses can be adapted to achieve customisation.

These guidelines apply to:

- accredited courses leading to a qualification;
- training programs (recognised components of courses that do not provide a qualification in their own right); and
- recognised short courses (which do not provide a qualification or credit into a course).

1. Modular Course Structure

1.1 All courses should be designed using a modular structure. While there is no requirement for a one-to-one correspondence between modules and competency standards, where competency standards exist, the curriculum document for the course must cross reference the relationship between modules and standards.

1.2 Options for course structures include:

(a) all compulsory modules (this may be appropriate for short courses and enterprise specific courses); or

(b) compulsory and elective modules (this provides capacity for learners to specialise in training undertaken; or

(c) compulsory (core or stream) and elective modules (this provides capacity for both occupational and enterprise-specific training).

2. Core structure

2.1 The curriculum document for a course submitted for accreditation must define the modules, if any, that are a compulsory component of the course and which must be successfully completed for the award of a qualification.

2.2 Where a course is designed to lead to a set of endorsed national competency standards which include core competencies, the course must have a compulsory component that corresponds to the core competencies.

2.3 Where no endorsed national competency standards exist but a course is designed against equivalent standards, similar considerations apply.

3. Choice is to be available within a course

Courses should make provision for elective modules wherever possible (see 1.2 above) to allow learners to choose pathways to suit their needs and aspirations. The curriculum document presented for accreditation should include a set of course rules defining the requirements for completion of the course, conferring of a qualification, and reporting of results against competency standards. For instance, an industry-wide module bank may be included and streams within it defined.

4. Courses can contain enterprise-specific modules

4.1 A course can contain modules which are specific to a particular enterprise. These modules will be recognised using the same processes and criteria as for other modules.

4.2 Enterprise-specific courses do not have to provide for customisation.

5. Courses may contain material beyond that required to develop specified competencies

Courses must be designed to enable learners to achieve endorsed national competency standards or equivalent. Courses submitted for accreditation may contain material beyond that needed to develop specified competencies if this is required by a particular group or enterprise, or if it is seen to confer a market advantage on a provider.

6. Customisation of elective modules

6.1 Subsequent to the accreditation of a course, a provider may add elective modules provided that the additional modules:

(a) are relevant to the purpose of the course; and

(b) are consistent with the level of the qualification.

6.2 The additional elective modules must be themselves recognised and may be taken from another accredited course or from a recognised training program or short course.

6.3 Customisation of courses may be achieved by the addition of enterprise-specific elective modules. If the additional modules are not themselves recognised, they must be presented to the appropriate authority for placement on the register.

7. Course structures to facilitate customisation for enterprises

7.1 A course may be accredited without module descriptors being developed for enterprise-specific elective modules provided that:

(a) the parameters within which elective modules may be included are clearly defined; and

(b) elective modules not formally documented but necessary to obtain a qualification form a limited proportion of the course.

7.2 When such elective modules are documented for inclusion they must be presented to the appropriate authority for placement on the register.

8. Modules can be contextualised

Modules can be adapted to meet the needs of enterprises or particular client groups through the following means, provided that they lead to the required competencies:

(a) contextualisation of the content to identify unique aspects that apply to an industry sub-division, enterprise or particular learner client group (e.g. regulatory requirements, products, terminology, technology, work practices, work environment conditions, corporate culture and strategic plans);

(b) specifying resource requirements in the module descriptor in terms of essential equipment, facilities, learning resources, etc.;

(c) including a statement in the module that provides information on the context within which the learning outcomes can be achieved. This may relate to enterprise, industry sub-sector or learner requirements;

(d) using assessment criteria for a learning outcome which are appropriate to the specific requirements of a particular workplace, occupation or industry classification.

9. Amendments to learning outcomes in modules

9.1 One or more learning outcomes may be added to a module where necessary to meet the needs of a particular enterprise or industry sub-sector.

9.2 The removal or alteration of a learning outcome:

(a) in an elective module, requires the module to be presented to the appropriate authority for recognition as a separate and distinct module. (This may require course rules governing elective choice to avoid learners gaining credentials by the accumulation of substantially similar modules);

(b) in a compulsory module that leads to endorsed national competency or equivalent standards, requires the module to be presented to the appropriate authority for recognition;

10. Administrative Provisions

10.1 Changes will be required in either compulsory or elective modules in response to changes in relevant or corresponding parts of endorsed national competency standards. In this case the module or modules must be presented to the recognition authority for noting.

10.2 Where a module is customised in accordance with these guidelines and there is a change in the way in which the module is identified (e.g. course title or number), the reporting of outcomes should identify the relationship to the parent module.

JOINT INDUSTRY TRAINING AND EDUCATION COUNCIL

TRAINING REFORM AGENDA AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS JOINT STATEMENT ON ISSUES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Employers, unions, governments and training providers in Australia are agreed on the need for a general and continuing improvement in the skills base of the workforce in a manner which supports the enhanced competitiveness of enterprises and meets the needs of employees. To achieve this objective will require changes to both our education and vocational training arrangements.

1.2 The future challenges of more competitive markets in the domestic and export areas and developing technology will increasingly require individuals to have more broadly based skills for job flexibility, problem solving and individual initiative along with the ability to apply skills in a wide range of settings.

The key areas where changes are being implemented in the education and vocational training areas to more clearly meet the present and future skill needs of enterprises and their employees include:

i] the inclusion of a number of key work related competencies in the final years of education or, where not undertaken at school , during the early years of vocational training

ii] the achievement of a nationally consistent vocational training system which avoids duplication of processes and waste of resources in areas such as accreditation, training delivery and recognition arrangements by industry, enterprises and individuals, seeking to participate in recognised vocational training.

iii] the introduction of a new nationally consistent system of vocational training through the foreshadowed Australian Vocational Certificate training arrangements.

iv] the needs of industry to be defined through industry and enterprise developed competency standards based on an appropriately structured Australian Standards Framework with those standards being met in nationally recognised training and qualifications.

v] the acceptance of a variety of pathways to achieve recognition of an individual's skills including on and off-the-job formal training, a combination of school based teaching and work experience, and recognition of prior learning processes

vi] the introduction of a nationally recognised system of qualifications which meet and are underpinned by competency standards

vii] a significant increase in the resources available to the vocational training area

1.4 The totality of the changes which are in the process of being implemented is know as the National Training Reform Agenda (NTRA).

1.5 Whilst employers, unions, governments and training providers are generally agreed on the need for change and reform there is a number of factors which are inhibiting a successful outcome. These factors include:

i] Concern that the reforms have industrial relations implications, particularly in the area of wage levels

ii] A perception that the process of change is too bureaucratic and complex and is not adequately reflecting the needs of industry

iii] The absence to date of a well developed '*training culture*' in Australia and an associated lack of recognition of the added value which can be achieved for enterprises through recognised vocational training.

2. INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ISSUES

2.1 This joint statement by employers, the ACTU and unions is intended to address the industrial relations issues associated with the NTRA.

2.2 The parties recognise and accept that to the extent that education and training increases the skills of employees and those skills are utilised in workplaces the value of the employee to the employer can increase. This factor, amongst others, is relevant for consideration in the determination of wage levels at industry or enterprise level.

The parties also recognise that employees seek nationally recognised qualifications in part to improve their future employment and career prospects.

2.3 It is agreed by the parties to this statement that in relation to the National Training Reform Agenda:

i] The reforms to the training system are being undertaken to provide appropriate skills to meet the present and future needs of Australian workplaces. The reforms are desirable and necessary on their own merits. There is no intention by any party to use them now or in the future as a platform to seek to raise general wage levels.

ii] In using an appropriately structured ASF a package of standards and a qualification will be aligned to a particular ASF level; these may be related to an occupation or a classification by the industrial parties in an industry or enterprise. This relationship at industry or enterprise level is not part of the competency standards endorsement process and does not establish a linkage for wage or classification purposes in areas covered by different competency standards or with a different occupation or classification in other industries or enterprises.

iii] The parties agree that in determining the relative value of work it is appropriate that reference by made to matters such as the skills exercised and qualifications required. Other relevant factors include the nature of the industry/enterprise and the conditions under which work is performed. iv] How particular industries or enterprises agree to group their competencies together into levels which are valuable to them should be flexible. Some industries and enterprises may agree to express skill/responsibility work level outcomes and their related competency standards through the classification in their restructured awards or enterprise agreements.

v] The parties agree that achievement of skills and a qualification at a particular ASF level does not establish automatic access to a given classification or pay level. The IRC has determined that in general the level of classification for employees and their wage rates are determined by a number of factors including skills used, not simply skills acquired. This does not preclude alternative arrangements being agreed to at enterprise level in appropriate cases.

vi] The parties acknowledge that employees with a level of competency or skill expressed at a particular ASF level may (and often will) receive differing actual rates of pay across different industries or enterprises depending on industry or enterprise wage arrangements.

3. SUMMARY

3.1 In summary the parties to this statement wish to see the training reforms, which employers, unions, governments and providers recognise as desirable, implemented generally in a wide range of industries, enterprises and occupations

3.2 Employers and the trade union movement are committed to operate in a co-operative way to implement the foundations of a nationally consistent Training Reform Agenda. These national foundations are:

i] Competency Standards

ii] Curriculum and Training materials

iii] Skills Recognition systems

3.3 In furthering a co-operative approach the industry parties will monitor the practical application of this agreement and may propose amendments to take account of its effect in industry. The parties also acknowledge that there are other issues at the interface of training and industrial relations which this joint statement does not address and undertake to continue a co-operative approach towards their resolution.

JITEC PARTICIPANTS

EMPLOYER	UNION
ACCI	ACTU
MTIA	AMWU - Manufacturing
BCA	SDA - Retail
NSW Chamber of Manufacturers	ASU - Clerical and Public Sector
Automotive	AEU - Education
Telecom	CPSU - Public Sector
Public Sector	NUW - Warehousing/Manufacturing
VECCI	AWU-FIME Primary/MF
Retail	LHMU - Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous
Electrical	CFMEU - Construction
ACM	CEPU - Communications, Electrical, Plumbing

PRINCIPLES AND OPERATING GUIDELINES FOR THE STANDARDS AND CURRICULUM COUNCIL AND THE NATIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

PREAMBLE

The States/Territories and the Commonwealth have agreed that the functions of the National Training Board Ltd. (NTB), the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC), and the National Staff Development Committee (NSDC) should be brought together within the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) structure responsible to Ministers through the ANTA Board.

Ministers for Vocational Education and Training have agreed to the formation of two separate committees under Section 10 of the ANTA Act; one, to be called the Standards and Curriculum Council, to cover competency standards, curriculum, the National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT), assessment and quality assurance and the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) within the vocational education and training system as described in paragraph 14; the other to be called the National Staff Development Committee, to cover staff development.

The operations of the Council and the Committee are to be based on the following principles:

- that the Commonwealth and the States/Territories agree to ensure that vocational education and training continues to progress agreed national training reforms to achieve a skilled and competitive Australia, through the provision of quality training which meets the needs of industry and other clients;
- that the Commonwealth and the States/Territories accept and will operate within the terms of competency standards established by the Council;
- that the Commonwealth and the States/Territories agree to support the coordination of curriculum effort and the development of national curriculum and national curriculum policy;
- that the Commonwealth and the States/Territories agree to support the development and implementation of national policy in relation to professional/staff development; and
- that the operations of the Council and Committee are to be within the scope of the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training and relate to the Strategy.

GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERSHIP

Membership

1. The Standards and Curriculum Council (the Council) will consist of:

   (a) a chairperson with a strong industry background;

   (b) one person nominated by each State, Territory and the Commonwealth;

   (c) four persons appointed after consultation with employer bodies; and

   (d) four persons appointed after consultation with the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

2. The Council should possess a balance of technical expertise in standards development, curriculum development or accreditation or sound knowledge of vocational education and training issues generally.

3. The National Staff Development Committee (the Committee) will consist of:

   (a) a chairperson;

   (b) a representative of each State/Territory Training Authority;

   (c) a representative of the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training;

   (d) a representative of the Australian Education Union;

   (e) a representative from industry; and

   (f) a private provider.

Appointment of Members

4. (a) The ANTA Board will appoint members of the Council and Committee after consultation with the Ministerial Council. Appointments will be in writing signed by or on behalf of the Chair of the ANTA Board.

   (b) Members of the Council and Committee, other than the chairpersons, may propose the appointment of a standing deputy to represent them on their behalf on occasions when they are not available to attend meetings.

(c) The ANTA Board will appoint standing deputies after consultation with the Ministerial Council.

(d) The appointment of a standing deputy will cease at the same time as the appointment of the member for whom they are deputy ceases.

Period of Office

5. (a) Standards and Curriculum Council
The Chair of the Council will be appointed for a term of three years. Of the remaining members, in the first instance, nine will be appointed for a term of three years and eight will be appointed for a term of two years. Thereafter, all members will be appointed for a term of three years.

(b) National Staff Development Committee
The Chair of the Committee will be appointed for a term of three years. Of the remaining members, in the first instance six will be appointed for a term of three years and six will be appointed for a term of two years. Thereafter, all members will be appointed for a term of three years.

(c) Members will be eligible for reappointment.

Remuneration and Allowances of Members

6. (a) Members of the Council and Committee will be remunerated in accordance with Remuneration Tribunal Determination Number 29 of 1994 (or any replacement Determination).

(b) Members will be paid travelling allowance in accordance with rates specified in Remuneration Tribunal Determination Number 29 of 1994 (or any replacement Determination).

(c) A member is not entitled to be paid any remuneration if that member holds any office or appointment, or is otherwise employed, on a full-time basis in the service or employment of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory.

Resignation

7. A member of the Council or Committee may resign by providing a signed notice of resignation to the Chair of the Council or Committee respectively. The Chair of the Council or Committee may resign by providing a signed notice of resignation to the Chair of the ANTA Board.

Casual Vacancies

8. Any casual vacancy in the office of a member may be filled by the appointment of another person to hold that office. The appointment will be made by the ANTA Board in consultation with the Ministerial Council. A person appointed to fill a casual vacancy will hold office for the balance of the term of appointment of the member in relation to whom the vacancy arises.

Disclosure of Interests

9. A member who has a material personal interest in a matter being considered, or about to be considered, by the Council or Committee must, as soon as possible after the relevant facts come to the member's knowledge, disclose the nature of the interest at a meeting of the Council or Committee.

Procedure at Meetings

10. (a) At a meeting of the Council or Committee, eleven members and seven members respectively constitute a quorum.

(b) Members may participate in meetings by:
(i) telephone; or
(ii) closed-circuit television; or
(iii) any other means of communication.

(c) The Council and Committee may regulate proceedings at their meetings as they consider appropriate and are to keep minutes of those proceedings.

(d) Where the chairperson of the Council is absent from a meeting, the members present should appoint one of their number, who falls within the membership category described in paragraphs 1 (c) or (d), to be the temporary chairperson for that meeting.

(e) The person presiding at a meeting of the Council has a deliberative vote and, in the event of an equality of votes, also has a casting vote.

Termination of Appointment

11. (a) The ANTA Board may, after consultation with the Ministerial Council, terminate the appointment of a member for misbehaviour or for physical or mental incapacity.

(b) If a member is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Council or Committee except on leave granted by the respective chairs the ANTA Board may, after consultation with the Ministerial Council, terminate the appointment of the member.

Vacation of Office/Cessation of Membership

12. The seat of a member will become vacant if the member:

(a) ceases to be employed by or involved with the sector or group he or she is representing on the Council or Committee;

(b) becomes of unsound mind or a person whose person or estate is liable to be dealt with in any way under the law relating to mental health;

(c) resigns his or her seat by notice in writing; or

(d) is absent for more than three months, without permission of the relevant Chair, from meetings of the Council or Committee held during that period.

POWERS

13. The Council and Committee within ANTA, in carrying out their functions, will operate within the framework provided by the National Strategy for Vocational Education and Training and within these national principles and operating guidelines agreed by Ministers. The powers to be exercised in relation to the functions described in paragraphs 14 and 16 will be of two basic types:

- those powers of an advisory and monitoring nature where the Council and Committee will report to Ministers through the ANTA Board, providing recommendations as appropriate. Powers of this sort will be exercised in relation to the functions described in paragraphs 14(a) to 14(k) and 16(a) respectively.

- those powers where the Council itself will exercise the powers in relation to the implementation of agreed policies and guidelines in an operationally independent and determinative manner, reporting only outcomes to the ANTA Board and Ministers. Powers of this sort will be exercised in relation to the functions described in paragraphs 14(l) to 14(s).

FUNCTIONS

14. The functions of the Council are to:

(a) develop strategic directions, broad guidelines and overall priorities for those elements of the national vocational education and training system within its functions;

(b) participate in budget negotiations with national ITABs in relation to the allocation of funds for competency standards development, including reviews through performance agreements with ITABs;

(c) promote the use of nationally consistent methods of describing national competency standards and establish such methods where necessary;

(d) coordinate the funding for, ensure effective linkages between and monitor the outcomes of the implementation of standards and nationally accredited curriculum;

(e) oversee and review the Australian Standards Framework and propose amendments where appropriate;

(f) work with the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board by:

- coordinating the implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework within the vocational education and training system

- nominating representatives of vocational education and training to the Advisory Board

- providing expert technical advice to the Advisory Board and other bodies on the relationship between qualifications and competency standards;

(g) promote, market and disseminate relevant information;

(h) administer the quality assurance functions for which the Council is responsible, including monitoring the effectiveness of the linkages between these functions and implementing these arrangements;

(i) provide advice on and monitor implementation of assessment principles and policy and administer assessment projects funded by ANTA;

(j) oversee and monitor the effective implementation of NFROT at a national level and support the coordination and operation of the NFROT Agreement;

(k) monitor and advise on international developments relevant to the Council's functions, and liaise and co-operate with international counterpart bodies;

(l) implement and refine national guidelines for the operation of those elements of the national vocational education and training system within its functions;

(m) recognise bodies to develop competency standards;

(n) endorse competency standards;

(o) place standards on the Register of National Competency Standards and maintain and publish the Register;

(p) develop, maintain and report on the status of a national register and relational database of competency standards, accredited courses, recognised training programs, short courses and registered providers;

(q) provide advice to State recognition authorities in relation to the delegation of accreditation;

(r) negotiate and allocate funding for curriculum development; and

(s) trade in curriculum products.

15. (a) Subject to sub-paragraph (b), the functions described in paragraphs 14(n) and 14(r) may be delegated by the Council.

(b) The Council will delegate in a manner which is consistent with policies agreed by the ANTA Board and Ministerial Council.

(c) The Council may revoke delegations made.

(d) The Council will advise the Board of any delegations made and revoked.

16. The function of the Committee is as follows:

    (a) the development of national policy and the management of national projects in relation to professional/staff development within the national vocational education and training system.

17. The Council and Committee will, in the performance of these functions, have regard to, and promote, the principles of access and equity.

18. States and Territories will retain responsibility for accrediting courses, recognising training programs, and registering providers consistent with nationally agreed principles.

EXERCISE OF FUNCTIONS BY COUNCIL

19. In determining national competency standards the Council will take account of advice from both industry and State/Territory and Commonwealth Governments;

20. In exercising relevant functions the Council will:

    (a) consult with, and take account of, advice from States/Territories and the Commonwealth and relevant industry bodies on resources required for the development and introduction of national competency standards and national curriculum;

    (b) satisfy itself through appropriate liaison with the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board and accrediting/approving authorities that there is consistency in the implementation of national competency standards; and

    (c) endorse competency standards developed by bodies recognised by the Council as Competency Standards Bodies where the Council is satisfied the Standards meet established criteria for endorsement.

        (i) in undertaking these functions the Council may seek the advice of the relevant established Industry Training Advisory Bodies
        (ii) enterprises and other bodies may be recognised by the Council as Competency Standards Bodies

21. States/Territories and the Commonwealth will be requested to formally agree to national competency standards proposed by the Council for an industry within fourteen (14) working days of the Council's agreement to the draft standards. Formal endorsement of these competency standards by the Council will proceed immediately after this period unless formal objections are received from the States/Territories or the Commonwealth within this prescribed period. In the latter event, the Council would be required to take account of those views in reaching a final decision.

22. Where revisions to already endorsed standards are sought by a Competency Standards Body and are in the categories set out below, the standards are able to be endorsed by the Council without a request for formal agreement of the States/Territories and the Commonwealth. The categories are:

- the unit content is altered to reflect feedback from users but does not change the structure or overall outcomes of the standards;
- the Range of Variables statements are altered to reflect broader application of the standards and/or Evidence Guides are added;
- packaging at an endorsed Australian Standards Framework level is revised to reflect more flexible work organisation which does not alter the alignment to a level previously endorsed; and
- extra or different workforce coverage for the endorsed standards is agreed to by industry but this coverage remains within that recognised for the submitting Competency Standards Body.

USE OF NATIONALLY ENDORSED COMPETENCY STANDARDS

23. Nationally endorsed industry or enterprise competency standards relate to workplace requirements. They may also include core and cross industry competencies and competencies which may relate to other State, Territory and Commonwealth certification requirements. National competency standards are benchmarks to be used by:

(i) Industry bodies and enterprises;

(ii) State and Territory vocational education and training authorities;

(iii) bodies involved in the development of curriculum;

(iv) State and Territory and other accrediting/approving bodies involved with and in arrangements for, the accreditation/approval of institutional and non-institutional training, including articulation arrangements between related courses whether they be provided by universities, TAFE Colleges, schools, private providers or industry-based providers;

(v) bodies established to certify skills by assessment; and

(vi) organisations involved in the recognition of migrant skills/overseas qualifications such as the National Office of Overseas Skills Recognition.

Nationally endorsed competency standards will be used to underpin VET qualifications in the Australian Qualifications Framework.

FUNDING

24. As agreed by Ministers, there will be a once-off adjustment in Commonwealth/State funding to fund the above arrangements.

ATTACHMENT B

PROGRESS AGAINST

PROPOSALS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF

TRAINING REFORMS

AUSTRALIAN
NATIONAL TRAINING
AUTHORITY

ANTA Ministerial Council
May 1995

Theme 1: RESPONSIVENESS

Standards and Accreditation Delegations

(The proposals were originally considered by the Implementation Group under the themes of the National Strategy for VET.)

- **There should be formal arrangements for endorsing standards by delegating authority to recognised 'best practice' competency standards bodies to directly endorse their own standards.**

  'Best practice' bodies would be those with a proven track record in quality standards development which meet agreed guidelines. (Proposal 1)

- **Work should commence immediately to develop appropriate performance benchmarks, guidelines and assessment processes that could apply to the proposals outlined in this report for the delegation of authority for standards endorsement and accreditation. (Proposal 29)**

Issue

Bodies meeting 'best practice' criteria should be able to directly endorse their own standards or accredit courses. Appropriate benchmarks will be developed.

Standards will continue to be placed on the National Register.

Outcomes

* **agree to the Standards and Curriculum Council delegating to recognised Competency Standards Bodies, including enterprises and industry bodies which meet the specific criteria, the authority to directly endorse their own standards. (Proposal (vii))**

* **agree to the criteria for delegation by the new Council of endorsement of competency standards. (Proposal (viii))**

Ongoing Tasks

The Standards and Curriculum Council to:

- refine and implement process for delegation of endorsement of competency standards to CSBs (refer to paragraph 15 (a) of the Principles and Operating Guidelines for the SCC);
- examine the issue of the delegation of authority to register providers.

(• Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 1: RESPONSIVENESS

Standards and Accreditation Delegations

* **agree that delegation to endorse their own competency standards should not be given to cross-industry Competency Standards Bodies/Lead Agencies at this stage, except in an area of exclusive coverage. (Proposal (ix))**

* **agree that the Council monitor the delegation function, in particular to ensure that both the delegation pathway to endorsement and direct endorsement by the Council, produce outcomes of equal quality that increase over time. (Proposal (x))**

* **agree to a set of Principles for Accreditation of Courses under Delegation. (Proposal (xi))**

(• Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 1: RESPONSIVENESS

Competency Standards

- **Broader criteria for standards development to be used for automatic placement on National Register. (Proposal 2)**
- **The 'enterprise stream' be supported and facilitated. (Proposal 3)**
- **Automatic placement of standards on the National Register if criteria are met. (Proposal 4)**
- **Australian Standards Framework descriptors be reviewed and interpreted in more flexible ways. (Proposal 6)**
- **Greater emphasis on the validation of industry standards in enterprises. (Proposal 7)**

Issues

Guidelines for competency standards development should be flexible and reflect the broad range of industry and enterprise training needs. The validation of standards in the workplace will become an essential part of the process of standards development.

The Australian Standards Framework descriptors will need to be reviewed.

Outcomes

* **agree that the Standards and Curriculum Council should clarify the process for alignment of competency standards to the ASF, emphasising that the alignment process occurs at the end of standards development. (Proposal (xix))**

Ongoing Tasks

The Standards and Curriculum Council to:

- implement options for the development, packaging and alignment of competency standards (refer to paragraph 14 (c) of the Principles and Operating Guidelines for the SCC);
- continue work on ensuring flexibility of the AQF as it relates to VET.
- consider means to provide ongoing support and assistance to companies wishing to pursue the enterprise stream.

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 1: RESPONSIVENESS

Competency Standards

* **agree that the Australian Standards Framework should be presented in Standards and Curriculum Council documentation and guidance material with descriptors in two complementary versions which are presented to aid clarity and flexibility in use:**

  - **the current text version used by the current National Training Board; and**
  - **the revised six characteristic matrix version, which is an elaboration of the ASF. (Proposal (xviii))**

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 1: RESPONSIVENESS

Funding of Competency Standards

Funding for competency standards development should form part of the broad performance agreements with National ITABs. (Proposal 8)

Issue

Industry will have increased opportunity to plan for standards development and set its own priorities.

Outcomes

Processes established for competency standards development funding to be included within national ITAB performance agreements from 1995/1996.

Ongoing Tasks

All future performance agreement negotiation between ANTA and national ITABs to include competency standards funding.

The Standards and Curriculum Council to provide advice on the means by which the resource impact resulting from standards and curriculum development can be assessed earlier in the process.

Theme 1: RESPONSIVENESS

Industrial Relations Agreement

The agreement between industry parties to clarify the relationship between training and industrial relations issues should be widely promoted and finalised, and subsequently be reflected in the position taken by industry parties in developing and using competency standards. (Proposal 5)

Issue

Although the industry parties have agreed to clarify the issues between training and industrial relations, there remains a need to promote this understanding.

Outcomes

JITEC has agreed to a position which clarifies the relationship between training and industrial relations issues.

Ongoing Tasks

JITEC members to publicise the agreed position.

Theme 2: QUALITY

Recognition of Training

- **Endorsement of work of State Recognition Authorities i.e.**
  - ◊ **common format for accreditation and registration**
  - ◊ **incorporation of short courses under the National Framework for the Recognition of Training**
  - ◊ **a national code of practice**
  - ◊ **a national protocol for registration**
  - ◊ **mutually recognising courses accredited, but not under the National Framework for the Recognition of Training. (Proposal 10)**

Clear assignment of responsibility for the National Framework for the Recognition of Training. (Proposal 11)

77

Issue

The National Framework for the Recognition of Training (NFROT) needs to operate more effectively. Measures taken by State Recognition Authorities to address problems with NFROT need to be formally endorsed and the operation of NFROT effectively coordinated.

Outcomes

Ministers endorsed Proposal 10 at the 3 November 1994 meeting.

The Standards and Curriculum Council will oversee, monitor and report on NFROT implementation.

Ongoing Tasks

The Standards and Curriculum Council to review the accreditation template after 12 months of operation.

An advisory mechanism under the Standards and Curriculum Council to continue the work of the Transition Team on Recognition of Training. In particular, consistency in the application of NFROT will need further action. There will also need to be national consistency in fees and charges relating to recognition processes and an examination of curriculum copyright issues.

78

(• Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 2: QUALITY

National Qualifications Framework

Responsibility for overseeing and monitoring the operation of the new Australian Qualifications Framework as it relates to the vocational education and training sector should be clearly assigned within a framework agreed by Ministers (see proposal 27). (Proposal 9)

Issue

While the implementation of the Australian Qualifications Framework is proposed to be undertaken on an inter-sectoral basis, coordination of implementation within the VET sector is necessary, including advice and guidance to accreditation bodies on the relationship between industry standards and qualifications.

Outcomes

Through the Standards and Curriculum Council, VET will have representation on the Australian Qualifications Framework Advisory Board. This will ensure appropriate advice on VET is given to the Advisory Board and in turn informs the work of the Council.

Ongoing Tasks

The Standards and Curriculum Council will need to monitor and oversee the Australian Qualifications Framework as it relates to VET.

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 2: QUALITY

Assessment

- **Accreditation of courses be based on the competencies required. (Proposal 14)**
- **Nationally consistent approaches to the implementation of the NFROT principles be agreed in conjunction with State recognition authorities. (Proposal 19)**
- **The organisation issuing qualifications needs to assure itself of the quality of the assessment. (Proposal 20)**
- **A network be developed to undertake assessment directly or to assist enterprises with workplace assessment. (Proposal 21)**
- **Funding be provided to support workplace assessment and to integrate the outcomes of workplace and off-the-job assessment. (Proposal 22)**

Issue

The emphasis should be assessment of outcomes not the means by which those outcomes are achieved.

There is a need for a more effective assessment system so that a competency based approach to training is implemented. NFROT principles should be applied to ensure processes that are readily available, fair, reliable and have the confidence of industry and those issuing qualifications. Appropriate assistance is critical to this development process. Progress on assessment issues will be ongoing and will need an industry by industry approach.

Outcomes

* **agree to national arrangements for assessment for the purposes of issuing a qualification under the Australian Qualifications Framework. (Proposal (xii))**

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Ongoing Tasks

ANTA, States/Territories and the Commonwealth need to develop a policy for providers to use public funds for assessment, when it is not related to part of a training program, not paid for by industry and the individual is disadvantaged and seeking to re-enter the workforce.

The Standards and Curriculum Council to continue to progress assessment issues as outlined in the Discussion Paper prepared by the Assessment Transition Team.

Theme 2: QUALITY

Assessment

* **agree to the requirement that individuals involved in assessment for national recognition be competent against the national assessor standards and competent in the area being assessed, or other quality assurance mechanisms approved by State/Territory Training or Recognition Authorities as outlined in Proposal (xiv). (Proposal (xiii))**

* **agree to the Standards and Curriculum Council facilitating the development of assessment models by industry in consultation with registered providers, leading to the establishment of assessment arrangements which result in full recognition under NFROT. These arrangements to be approved by State/Territory Training or Recognition Authorities. (Proposal (xiv))**

* **agree that ANTA, in consultation with States, Territories and the Commonwealth, provide advice to the next Ministerial Council meeting on funding of, and charges for, assessment having regard to access and equity issues. (Proposal (xv))**

Evidence guides to be seen as a necessary component of all competency standards developed.

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 2: QUALITY

Quality and Efficiency in the VET Sector

- **Quality assurance arrangements in place by 1996 for providers and agencies receiving public funds. (Proposal 34)**

Issues

Quality assurance arrangements will include: a commitment to quality delivery including management; competitive funding arrangements and better performing ITABs.

Outcomes

Consensus on the various nationally consistent approaches to establishing quality assurance processes and achieving best practice standards. This will include identification of the elements of customer service and a range of other essential features of a best practice VET organisation. A suite of national projects will assist in the achievement of the Proposal.

Ongoing Tasks

Theme 3: ACCESSIBILITY

User Choice

- **'User choice' pilots to be undertaken in 1995. (Proposal 30)**
- **Government funding to be paid to the provider by the State Training Authority. (Proposal 31)**

Issue

'User Choice' is based on the concept of competition between quality providers around quality and service. 'User Choice' will allow for increased partnerships between enterprises and providers at the delivery point.

Outcomes

* **agree to the User Choice Principles. (Proposal (xvi))**

* **agree to the inclusion of user choice pilots in the 1996-1997 State/Territory Training Profiles with the objective of testing the principles in all States and Territories and across diverse industries. (Proposal (xvii))**

Ongoing Tasks

Evaluation of pilots to be undertaken later in 1995 by the Transition Team on User Choice.

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 3: ACCESSIBILITY

Accreditation

- **State recognition authorities with responsibility for accreditation should:**
  - ◊ **expand the system of industry based recognition**
  - ◊ **delegate accreditation powers directly to 'best practice' ITABs**
  - ◊ **delegate accreditation powers to 'best practice' providers. (Proposal 17)**

- **State recognition authorities should:**
  - ◊ **develop and publicise nationally consistent client service standards**
  - ◊ **review the composition of State accreditation bodies. (Proposal 18)**

Issue

There is a need to speed up the accreditation process and give greater authority to industry bodies and providers. For this to be effective, State/Territory recognition procedures need to be re-examined.

Outcomes

* **agree to a set of Principles for Accreditation of Courses under Delegation. (Proposal (xi))**

* **agree on Client Service Standards. (Proposal (v))**

With agreement on the delegation of authority to accredit and nationally consistent client service standards, expansion of Industry Based Recognition will be further facilitated.

A balance of representation between industry parties and vocational education and training systems where it does not exist, will be achieved progressively as legislation in each State and Territory is reviewed.

Ongoing Tasks

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 3: ACCESSIBILITY

The Australian Vocational Training System

- **The Australian Vocational Training System to cover an extended range of participants. (Proposal 23)**

- **Nationally consistent 'key competencies' to be progressed (Proposal 24), and the outcomes of the AVTS pilot project phase to be reviewed. (Proposal 25)**

- **Responsibilities of the different parties in relation to the AVTS to be clearly allocated. (Proposal 26)**

Subsequently dealt with by MCEETYA.

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 4: EFFICIENCY

Curriculum

- **The funding of standards development and curriculum be brought together in a single agency. (Proposal 12)**
- **ITABs assume greater responsibility for curriculum validation. (Proposal 13)**
- **Guidelines developed to enable curriculum to be designed and delivered in a more flexible way. (Proposal 15)**
- **Equal and fair access to national curriculum and use of national curriculum should be monitored. (Proposal 16)**

Issue

There is need for those involved in curriculum development to be brought into the standards development process at an early stage to provide advice on the means by which training to achieve standards may be delivered.

Outcomes

* **agree that the Standards and Curriculum Council, in conjunction with State/Territory Recognition Authorities, develop a nationally compatible database of competency standards, accredited courses, short courses, recognised training programs and registered providers and advise on a timetable for implementation. (Proposal (vi))**

* **agree to the Customisation Guidelines. (Proposal (xx))**

Ongoing Tasks

The Standards and Curriculum Council to:

- implement processes to more closely align standards development, curriculum and training development, and assessment (refer to paragraph 14 (d) of the Principles and Operating Guidelines for the SCC);
- develop policy on fees and charges for publicly funded curriculum.

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 4: EFFICIENCY

Curriculum

The development of competency standards and approaches to assessment will be brought together as a single operation under the management of a relevant ITAB.

A coordinated approach to the funding of standards and curriculum (where necessary) using performance agreements with national ITABs to be negotiated between April and June 1995. The approach includes the operational links between the funding of standards and curriculum and a process for their coordinated management.

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

Theme 4: EFFICIENCY

Roles and Responsibilities

- **The National Training Board(NTB), the Australian Committee for Training Curriculum (ACTRAC), the National Staff Development Committee (NSDC), the National Framework for the Recognition of Training and the National Qualifications Framework should be brought together under new agency. (Proposal 27)**

- **Memorandum of Understanding in relation to the National Training Board be reflected in the new arrangements. (Proposal 28)**

Issue

To overcome current fragmentation and unclear accountability responsibilities in the areas of curriculum and standards development and staff development, a nationally coordinated approach is needed. The establishment of a national body is intended to achieve this. Legislative issues will need to be considered and a firm recommendation prepared for the November MINCO.

Outcomes

* **agree that the National Training Board (NTB) is to cease functioning and the current NTB Memorandum of Understanding is to be discontinued from 1 July 1995, with the NTB to be liquidated as quickly as is feasible after that date. (Proposal (i))**

under paragraph 6 (3) (b) of the *Australian National Training Authority Act 1992*, consent to the conferral on the Australian National Training Authority from 1 July 1995 the functions listed in

Ongoing Tasks

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

paragraphs 14 and 16 of the document "Principles and Operating Guidelines for the Standards and Curriculum Council and the National Staff Development Committee". (Proposal (ii))

* **agree to the "Principles and Operating Guidelines for the Standards and Curriculum Council and the National Staff Development Committee" (previously circulated for out-of-session clearance) and to a review of the Council and Committee at a time to be determined by Ministers. (Proposal (iii))**

* **agree**

(1) that a Memorandum of Understanding be entered into between the members of ACTRAC Products Ltd and ANTA to link the operation of the company with the policies of the Authority and the Ministerial Council;

(2) that the broader function of marketing products of the Standards and Curriculum Council be conferred on the company, to be

(* Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

exercised, where relevant, in consultation with the VET bodies responsible for co-ordination of international marketing; and

(3) that consequential amendments be made to the company's Memorandum of Association. (Proposal (iv))

Theme 4: EFFICIENCY

Information and Access

- **'One-stop-shops' to provide comprehensive information on vocational education and training and how it works. (Proposal 32)**

- **The National Staff Development Committee to develop a major program of staff training and development. (Proposal 33)**

Issue

Information on the vocational education and training system, particularly how it works, needs to be more readily available. Existing agencies such as TAFE, ITABs, Group Training Companies etc. need to be points of access. However, their staff will need ongoing information and training.

Outcomes

The pilot to progress the NSW training and information network (TRAIN) to the national arena will provide for future direction.

The National Training Reform Professional Development Strategy, under the National Staff Development Committee, to train VET staff in the implementation of the national agenda for VET.

Ongoing Tasks

The broadening of the TRAIN pilot to ensure a national source of information and referral.

The National Staff Development Committee to ensure continued activity in training VET staff on how the vocational education and training system operates.

(• Denotes a proposal in main agenda item.)

NOTES